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9 February 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Deputy Director for
                  Intelligence
                  Assistant Deputy Director for
                  Science and Technology

SUBJECT   :   COINS Review Group

    1. Last November, by agreement between Mr. Helms
and Dr. Hall, an interagency Review Group was formed
to review and evaluate the COINS system. I was named
as CIA member of the Review Group, and I drew support
from OPPB and CRS in Working Group meetings which
were held to gather and sift data required for the
study. Data on CIA files were provided by OER, OSR,
CRS, NPIC, IAS and FBIS in the Intelligence Directorate
and by OSI and FMSAC in the Directorate of Science
and Technology.

    2. The Review Group and its Working Group met
numerous times in the past two months to review prob-
lems of present file adequacy and potential for
expansion, security, present usage, alternatives
to COINS and their costs, etc. [   ]-the   25X1
Chairman of the Review Group--and his staff have
now prepared a draft report. I understand that this
report is now with Dr. Hall and that no more meetings
of the Review Group are contemplated by [   ]   25X1
We have not been furnished with the final text of
the basic report, but we have an early version that
is probably close to the final one. The draft con-
clusions and recommendations have been sent to me
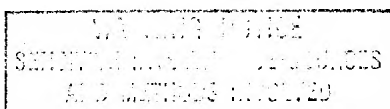and I attach a copy with some marginal notations
I have made.

    3. The following comments are prompted by an
examination of the conclusions and recommendations,
which address both the COINS system and its management
environment. I have sent copies of this memorandum
and attachments to Messrs. Eisenbeiss, Briggs, Iams
and [   ] plus the IC Staff.   25X1
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SECRET

SECRET

4. From the user point of-view, I have no real problem with the recommendations to continue COINS and to make it possible for the system to handle TK data. The system really cannot be viable unless the exchange of TK information is permitted.

5. However, the principal conclusions are laced with words whose cumulative effect is to push the paper toward over-statement on behalf of the need for action to stimulate widespread on-line and interactive file access, and there is little recognition of the difficulties to be faced in accomplishing the results. Throughout the paper, there is consistently high profile to the requirement for being "on-line." Other agencies may have such a requirement for on-line file sharing, but I believe that these intense statements are at variance with the needs of our business day-to-day in this Agency and even with our needs as we see them developing for some time ahead.

6. One other point should be made, stemming from the "on-line" thrust of the paper. The conclusions call for adding new files to the COINS system and for system upgrading. One of these new files would be CRS' AEGIS file, which is not now in the system. There would be significant problems of practicality and cost for the Agency in putting this entire file on-line within the COINS network. The Agency does not now have the software to make this file on-line in the manner called for in the paper, and there would be security considerations, also, beyond the TK problem. Further, there is danger in letting the idea of system upgrading slip by unnoticed. When the upgrading concept is stretched--as the recommendations provide--to the idea of the entire networks being interactive, a whole new dimension of system complexity and cost is entered. The draft that we have seen calls for the COINS Project Management Office to submit a detailed plan for upgrading COINS to provide interactive capability and to include world-wide users.

7. Another of the paper's findings is that there are shortcomings in the way COINS is presently managed.

-2-

SECRET

The Review Group did indeed perceive such shortcomings, but NSA was not seen as the culprit so much as the victum of a situation in which a single agency has been asked to substitute for community-level direction. The Chairman (not the Review Group, however, as the paper states) has proposed that

> "The ASD(I) be appointed COINS executive agent under the auspices of the DCI with the COINS Project Management Office (PMO) made responsible to the executive agency."

This is a recommendation which Dr. Hall might make to the Director, but I do not believe it should be a part of the Review Group report. In the absence of a stronger role in COINS management by the DCI, a logical step would of course be a strengthening of COINS management authority within DOD which supplies most of the funds for COINS. One certain effect of such a change, however, would be to increase the authority of the DOD in COINS vis-a-vis the DCI. [   ] proposal is one alternative to the continued drift of COINS authority, an alternative he appears willing to relinquish if the DCI desires to take charge and moves to do so.

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8. I have told [   ] staff man on this project--[   ]--that Review Group consideration of the draft would seem to be called for. He indicated a willingness to meet bilaterally with me, but that there were no plans to get the whole group together.

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9. I suggest that I take the following actions:

a. Convey to [   ] suggestions for changes in the tone of the paper, so that it is less strident in its call to the colors.

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b. Suggest to him also that some of the policy recommendations--those that are really not ones that "users" can appropriately address-- be dropped from the paper itself.

-3-

SECRET

These include:

--The recommendation that ASD(I) be appointed
COINS executive agent.

--The recommendation relating to Intelligence
program budget actions.

9. If you agree I will get back to [   ] on these
points, though I may have to raise the noise level a
bit to get his attention.

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Deputy Director
Strategic Research

Attachment:
[   ] Draft
Conclusions and
Recommendations

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-4-

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